



STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012, 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Christopher Todd, Stefanie Cunningham, Charles McCleary, Stanislav Moline

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Hurley, Sean Kelly

STAFF PRESENT: Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner/Wetlands Agent/Zoning Official; and Cheryl Benton, Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Todd called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (on non-agenda items): None

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Report: Board of Selectmen action on Kloter Farms Tax Abatement referral.

Ms. Houlihan reported that she attended the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting on Monday to advocate on behalf of the EDC. Ms. Houlihan stated she received a call from Selectman Miller with questions on insurance coverage that Kloter Farms had in order to bridge the gap between the loss of interruption of services. She noted that requiring insurance coverage information is not part of the current policy and suggested that Peter Welti of Kloter Farms be contacted to seek that information, and the Assessor be contacted regarding assessment questions. Mr. Miller brought his concerns to the rest of the BOS. They felt he was questioning policy and that the application was applied appropriately and agreed it should go forward. Ms. Houlihan reported that a motion passed 4 to 1 to grant abatement for Kloter Farms pending Town Meeting approval. The Town Meeting is set for February 27th at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall. Mr. Welti was not present, but David Schneider attended in his stead on behalf of Kloter Farms.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Report: Review of Mission Statement

Commissioner McCleary suggested talking about proposed changes to the document and tracking them. Commissioner Todd inquired about reviewing and submitting changes via email. Ms. Houlihan agreed that revisions could be circulated on email, but advised that all comments be directed to her and advised against commissioner dialogue outside of public meetings. Commissioner McCleary suggested having

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discussion amongst the 3 commissioners present. Commissioner Cunningham suggested setting a due date. All agreed that a decision will be made at the March meeting and a vote will take place at that time regardless of who is present. Ms. Houlihan printed out a copy of the current working mission statement for discussion. Commissioners agreed they want to focus more on promoting new business. They also agreed it is important to include mention of preserving open space and to acknowledge consistency with sister commissions and the master plan. Ms. Houlihan will revise the working document with their ideas and send it to them via email in order to vote on it next month.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

Ms. Houlihan reviewed the memo sent to the BOS clarifying that the EDC has continually supported this program since the adoption of the enabling Statute, noting that the BOS minutes from January 9, 2012, allude that pursuit of this program has not proceeded because of the EDC. She expects their memo to be on the next regular BOS meeting and will let the Commission know the outcome.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS.

3 Report: Business Surveys and Site Visits

Ms. Houlihan reported she was able to visit Big Y along with John Colonese, Assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer. Some things learned via the visit: services include ATM banking and pharmacy with free delivery; self-serve checkout has been removed because it was not cost effective; Big Y headquarters is in Springfield, MA; full time employees make up 10% of their work force, part time 70%, and student/casual 20%; skilled workers include meat cutters, cake decorators and bakers and make up 10% of their work force; 40% of employees live in town - otherwise mostly Tolland and Enfield; 30% growth since opening in 2006; building is leased; in the next 5 years they expect to sustain or increase employment if population grows; don't have hiring issues - usually word of mouth is successful. Ms. Houlihan reported that the manager spoke highly of Ellington High School kids and said they are good workers, reliable, and competent. Ms. Houlihan reported that Big Y is interested in being in the local business directory.

Ms. Houlihan reported that the next visit is Dymotek on February 23rd. Representative Christopher Davis will attend and would like to attend other businesses too.

Dates available for future visits are targeted for 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22. Appointment times are 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. At this time visits are planned for Ellington Pizza, Dzen's, Jerry's Donuts, Kelly Fradet, Rice Packaging, Accutime, Natural Country Farms, and Merrill Industries. Commissioner McCleary stated that he is available on March 1st. Ms. Houlihan said she is going to try to visit Rice Packaging and Accutime on March 1st. Ms. Houlihan will contact businesses next week to set dates and will advise the commissioners as appointments are made.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

4. Report: Business Directory/Virtual Welcome Wagon

Ms. Houlihan reported that she obtained a list of businesses from the Assessor and it contains 845 businesses. Ms. Houlihan noted that the list needs to be scrubbed. She spoke to Jeannie Reed, wife of the EDC Chairman in Somers, to gain insight as to how Somers created their directory. Ms. Reed told Ms. Houlihan that they paid her to scrub the list and that she used 411.com and the Secretary of State's online information to get business names and other information. Somers called each company to confirm their information and to get permission to put them in the directory. Chairman Todd inquired about the possibility of asking the High School Business class to assist. Ms. Houlihan will look into that option.

Ms. Houlihan reported that Ellington Printery is willing to negotiate price and wants to be competitive in order to win the job.

Ms. Houlihan reported that the start-up costs for Somers was around \$3900, not including mailing. Ms. Houlihan reported that Ms. Reed also mentioned that a local paper circulated the Somers Directory for them for free. Ms. Houlihan noted concerns that Somers had for mailing the directory along with a weekly circular, however mailing would be costly.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

5. Report: Tax Incentive Programs

No report.

6. Report: Current Economic Activity

Ms. Houlihan reported that Ellington Printery approached the Town for permits to relocate to the rear of 25 - 27 West Road. They are thinking of expanding their services to include a print/copy center.

Great Country Barns is looking to build a workshop in back of their sales office. They are going through the approval process now.

Ms. Houlihan reported that Buettner's Bakery is now open.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the January 11, 2012, regular meeting minutes.
MOVED (MCCLEARY), SECOND (MOLINE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 14, 2011 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.

2. Election of Officers (Chairman and Vice Chairman)

Chairman Todd noted his desire to step down as Chairman due to family priorities, but would like to remain on Commission. Commissioner McCleary is possibly interested in the Co-Chair position. The Commission will be looking for nominations for next month for a vote.

3. Correspondence:

- a. Memo to Agencies/Boards/Commission Chairpersons from Maurice Blanchette, First Selectman dated 01/20/2012. (2012-2013 Town Budget)

The BOS is looking for budget recommendations by February 15th. Ms. Houlihan suggested keeping their budget the same as last year. Looking to create the business directory in 2012, however it should be self-funded with advertising costs. Metro Hartford Alliance fees should remain in budget as it is a great way to get information on funding, grant programs, etc. The Commission would like to request funding for part time help for the business directory as a one-time request to get it started, and then the budget would return to the previous number. Chairman Todd suggested offering a \$500 scholarship for a spring/summer internship rather than an hourly fee.

Commissioner McCleary noted that the Airport Study information on the EDC website is very prominent and thinks the layout should be reconsidered. The new layout should include the new mission statement, town economic data, business resource link, meeting minutes, etc., in order of importance.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (MOLINE), SECOND (MCCLEARY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Benton / km". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl Benton
Recording Secretary